

GAMEDAY

Guide

www.kstatecollegian.com | Friday, Oct. 22, 2010 | K-State vs. Baylor

ONE WIN AWAY



Lisle Alderton | Collegian

Members of the K-State football team prepare to take the field against Kansas in Lawrence. The Wildcats will take on Baylor on Saturday in search of their sixth win, which would make them bowl eligible for the first time since 2006.

Wildcats travel to Baylor in search of sixth win

Ashley Dunkak
sports editor

Last season, six wins did not qualify K-State for bowl eligibility because two of those wins came over Football Championship Sub-division teams. This season, the Wildcats are 5-1 with six games to go. If K-State returns from Waco, Texas, with a win over Baylor, it will be in the running for its first bowl appearance since 2006.

The Wildcats' last game did not represent its season to this point; before slaughtering in-state rival KU 59-7, K-State got hammered by Nebraska 48-13. Before that, wins came on generally slim margins and the back of senior running back Daniel Thomas, who came close to 100 yards against the Jayhawks.

However, senior quarterback Carson Coffman's emergence as a potential playmaker versus a game manager seemed to open up opportunities for the Wildcats to run a more balanced offense — 276 yards on the ground, 184 yards through the air.

While head coach Bill Snyder said it's important the offense run and pass consistently because it makes the Wildcats more difficult to defend, he attributed last Thursday's win to fundamentals such as consistency on both sides of the ball, good execution and a lack of major errors such as turnovers of penalties. Snyder said the combination of K-State's execution and KU's inability to execute determined the outcome. He also mentioned the Wildcats got some breaks because they played well.

"I think the ball bounced our way on numerous occasions," Snyder said. "If you play well, you

are more apt to come up with some of those breaks, and I think that is what happened versus Kansas. They are a better team than the scoreboard showed; they just had some things not go their way."

The Bears (5-2, 2-1 Big 12 Conference) had a much closer game in their last contest, knocking off the Colorado Buffaloes 31-25. Baylor did not score first, lead going into halftime, lead until just over four minutes remained in the third quarter. It amassed 71 yards worth

ence. He said this team is capable of almost anything offensively.

"If they wanted to, they could probably just line up and run the ball right at you; they have a 295-pound fullback that could probably assist that," Snyder said. "We know they have a fine quarterback and running back that have the ability to run the ball, whether it be with the option-game or the quarterback run-game. They have receivers that can run extremely well, and they have good hands.

game against Colorado and 635 yards against Texas Tech the week before. However, Snyder said the Bears have apparently made vast improvements from the previous years, taking secondary players and moving them to up to the linebacker position to give them a great deal of speed on their second and third levels. Snyder also said Baylor's front four are big, very physical, long and able to get their hands up.

"They can redirect how you throw the football and how you sit in the pocket," Snyder said. "They are big on the inside against the run. There is 670 pounds between the two defensive tackles. Their talent is well distributed throughout their defense."

Senior quarterback Carson Coffman said what the team has watched so far on Baylor indicates the players can move well.

"They look really fast on film, but we have not seen a whole lot — only two days worth," Carson said. "The film we have seen definitely shows that they have some quickness."

Something else to ponder: K-State defeated KU 59-7 after Baylor defeated KU 55-7 a week and a half earlier. Both teams have been receiving votes in favor of them being ranked in national polls. One or the other will be bowl eligible by the conclusion of the game.

"We do not talk about it that much," said senior offensive lineman Wade Weibert. "We just concentrate on going 1-0 each week. I think that is what has made it possible for us to have this opportunity at this point in the season. Hopefully we can go 1-0 and not have to worry about becoming eligible the last couple games of the season."

K-STATE VS. BAYLOR

When: Saturday, 2:35 p.m.

Where: Floyd Casey Stadium (Waco)

Television: None

Radio: K-State Sports Network

Series: K-State leads 6-1

of penalties, though. Yet, somehow, Baylor found a way to win.

The Bears' quarterback, Robert Griffin III, ranked fourth in the country for offense going into the game, and his 374-yard performance against Colorado did not negatively impact that statistic, to be sure. Running back Jay Finley also helped out by contributing a career-high 143 rushing yards.

Snyder said this is the best Baylor team he has ever seen since the inception of the Big 12 Confer-

They have good blockers who are big. Their offensive line averages around 313 pounds, and they can block very well. Collectively, they are probably as good of an offensive line as I have seen up to this point in time."

To recap: the Bears can throw, can run, can block, and are big and fast. As Snyder said, there is much they are lacking.

However, the Baylor defense has not been quite as effective. It gave up 399 yards of offense in its

Coffman discusses senior season, win against KU

Ashley Dunkak
sports editor

Last Thursday, KU unwittingly helped K-State quarterback Carson Coffman get in the zone during warmups. The pregame song list included "Lose Yourself" by Eminem and "In the Air Tonight" by Phil Collins, and the numbers were familiar ones. The game that followed would showcase Coffman's progression as a quarterback and give him something to build on.

All week leading up to the game, Coffman had been trying to get back into the mindset he had during his high school playing days. That might seem a bit odd, until one considers Raymore-Peculiar went 26-0 during his time there. He never lost a game as a starter.

"In high school, I just felt like nobody could stop our offense," Coffman said. "Every time we went out there, every time when I was standing on the sideline, I would hope that their offense would punt it and pin us at the one just so we could gain 99 yards on every drive. That's how confident I felt that we could move the ball, and that's what I'm trying to get back to."

The 59-7 defeat of the Jayhawks has Coffman's confidence at perhaps the highest level it has been at K-State, and rightfully so. Against KU, the son of

11-year NFL veteran Paul Coffman ran for three touchdowns, passed for two more and completed 15 of 16 passes. The one incompletion was a drop, by the way.

According to at least one teammate, his demeanor was about the same as it always is.

"Carson was Carson," said sophomore fullback Braden Wilson. "He was pretty humble about it. He handles success well, and I expect him to keep doing the same thing as the season progresses."

The quarterback said he was pleased with aspects of his performance in the KU game because in several situations when shots K-State called were not open, he either ran the ball or checked it down, which was something he had not done very well in the past.

"Earlier in the season I was a little bit hesitant or scared to try to check into the perfect play, but I feel like (wide receivers) coach (Michael) Smith is one of the guys who's really encouraged me, saying, 'This is your team. You've been in the film room; you know what plays to check to. You can do it.'"

Co-offensive coordinator/quarterbacks coach Del Miller has helped him learn to recognize when plays will not



K-State Quarterback **Carson Coffman** scores his first touchdown of the night against Kansas. The fifth-year senior recorded five total scores en route to a 59-7 victory for the Wildcats.

Nathaniel LaRue
Collegian

BY THE NUMBERS

Numbers to consider when K-State takes on Baylor Saturday

20

-Jersey number of William Powell

The senior running back has continued to quietly complement fellow senior rusher Daniel Thomas; he is averaging more than 10 yards per carry. However, Powell also affects areas other than the backfield. He's currently ranked seventh nationally in kickoff returns. During the Nebraska game, he had an opportunity to pad those stats because Nebraska scored so much, but since KU only kicked off once, we'll call those games like offsetting penalties. Long story short: Powell has subtly contributed much to this team.

1994

-Year of Baylor's last bowl game

K-State received a bid to the Texas Bowl of 2006 and lost to Rutgers, but the Bears haven't been to the postseason in over 15 years. They're in the same situation as the Wildcats as far as their record goes; they need one more win for bowl eligibility. They're coming off a win as well, and they're hungry. Both K-State and Baylor shellacked the hapless Jayhawks, so this could be a very competitive game — too bad no one outside of Waco gets to watch it.

335

-Average yards/game for Robert Griffin III

The Bears' sophomore quarterback is certainly one for whom the Wildcats' defense better watch. He'll be different than the last two (Nebraska's Taylor Martinez and UCF's Jeff Godfrey) quarterbacks the K-State defense has seen, however. When you break down those average yards, right around 225 of them are in the air. This kid throws. That isn't to say he can't run; he just passes more readily.

18-11

-K-State's record against Texas teams under Snyder

When the stadium's namesake is involved, K-State tends to hold its own, even against teams from that football-is-our-lifestyle state down South. When the new schedule (nine Big 12 games each year) kicks in, the Wildcats will face at least two Texas teams every season. In 2010, Baylor will be the Wildcats' first, but not the last; they go on to play nationally ranked Texas (who just defeated Nebraska, by the way) at home and North Texas (not ranked) in Denton. As it looks now, it seems this game might be the most even matchup.

13

-K-State players from Texas

Natives from the Lone Star State have made big contributions to the Wildcats. Several stalwarts on the defensive line hail from Texas: Prizell Brown, Raphael Guidry and Ray Kibble. Defensive backs from the same state include Joseph Bonugli, Thomas Ferguson, Stephen Harrison — who last week returned a KU fumble 85 yards for a touchdown — and Terrance Sweeney — who ranks sixth in the country with eight passes defended. Linebackers Cody Marley and Blake Slaughter are from Texas, as is running back John Hubert — a native of Waco — and wide receiver Adrian Hilburn. And, oh yes, that guy named William Powell: see first paragraph.

51-13

-Score of last K-State/Baylor game

The last time the Wildcats and Bears butted heads, Josh Freeman and Jordy Nelson still graced the K-State roster. That was back in October of 2007. However, there is one name in the report of that game which ties into the 2010 squad: Carson Coffman. Then the backup quarterback, Coffman threw an eight-yard pass to Nelson which happened to be the receiver's 76th of that year. This surpassed Darnell McDonald's mark of 75 catches in 1988.

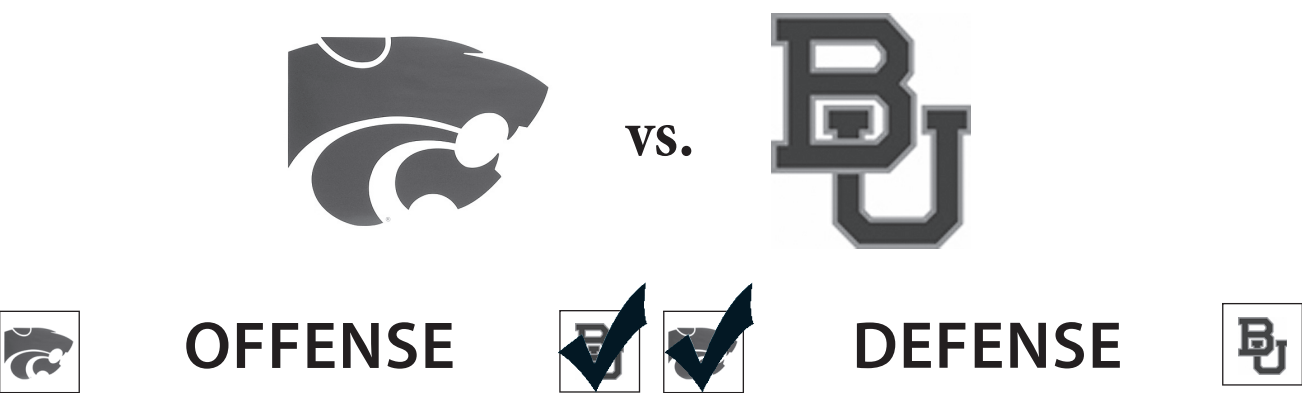
2,047

-Career rushing yards for Daniel Thomas

With his performance last week, Thomas has 218 yards to go and six games in which to gain them to be the first player since Darren Sproles in 2004 to earn consecutive 1,000-yard seasons. He is currently seventh all-time in rushing at K-State.

-Compiled by Ashley Dunkak

MATCHING UP



It's no huge secret that nearly all of Baylor's success lies in the hands of its quarterback. Though he's only a sophomore, Robert Griffin III has burst onto the national scene since returning from a knee injury that he suffered early last season. He's thrown for 1,969 yards, run for 376 more and accounted for 12 total touchdowns. Last season showed how crucial Griffin is to the Bears' success, and he should be considered a very legitimate threat on the ground, as well as through the air.

Several Baylor receivers have established themselves as ample targets for Griffin to throw to, as five wideouts have logged at least 220 receiving yards through seven games. Junior Kendall Wright, who is nearing the top of the school record books in several categories, has led this charge. He ranks fourth in school history with 156 catches, sixth with 1,924 receiving yards and eighth with 12 touchdowns. This season, he's hauled in 40 passes for 535 yards and three scores.

Last Thursday against in-state rival Kansas, the Wildcats' offense had arguably its best showing of the season behind the balanced attack of senior quarterback Carson Coffman. The native of Peculiar, Mo., completed 15 of 16 passes for 184 yards and two scores, and ran for three more. Senior running back Daniel Thomas shook off two straight subpar performances, rushing for 91 yards and a touchdown.

Numbers aside, keep in mind that K-State was playing against an extremely vulnerable Jayhawk defense. It's highly unlikely that Coffman will be able to reproduce that kind of success against the Bears.

Griffin, on the other hand, seems poised for a big day. K-State has faced a dual-threat quarterback on three occasions prior to this weekend, and each time, the stats favored the opposition.

Bottom line: K-State's offense came to life in a big way last week, but the always-dangerous Griffin gives Baylor the edge.

Without question, K-State's most dominant defensive showing came against the Jayhawks, when the Wildcats allowed just seven points. They forced a season-high three turnovers and scored their first nonoffensive touchdown on an 85-yard fumble return by senior cornerback Stephen Harrison. K-State nearly completed a shutout, but KU scored on a rushing touchdown with just more than two minutes remaining.

However, despite pitching a near-shutout, the Wildcats gave up a substantial amount of yards. This has been a problem throughout the season for K-State, but, with the exception of a loss to Nebraska, the Wildcats have done just enough to win games. It's unlikely that they'll have that luxury this weekend against the Bears, as Griffin has had no problem turning yards into points this season.

Fortunately for K-State, Griffin is a pass-first quarterback. The Wildcats have fared much better against the pass than the run, as they enter the contest ranked No. 12 in pass defense.

While they've been more balanced than K-State, the Bears haven't done much better defensively, as they check in at No. 80 in total defense. Baylor's starting unit has some playmakers — specifically freshman defensive end Tevin Elliott — but it hasn't been able to stop opponents from racking up yards and getting into the end zone. Several of the team's defensive weaknesses were exposed two weeks ago when Baylor dropped a 45-38 decision to Texas Tech in Dallas.

Because K-State has been so run-heavy in the first half of the season, expect the Bears to stack the box in order to stop Thomas. The Wildcats will need Coffman to replicate some of his success from last week to spread out the Baylor defense. Thomas has shown he can be dangerous when given a little room to work with, but even the nation's elite backs struggle when an entire defense only focuses on them.

While neither squad has been particularly great, expect the Wildcats to have a very slim defensive advantage.

SPECIAL TEAMS

Senior Josh Cherry was only called on to kick one field goal against the Jayhawks — a 38-yard attempt — and put it through the uprights to push his season total to a perfect 6-for-6. While he only got one chance at a field goal, he got plenty of work in, as he made all eight extra point attempts. Sophomore punter Ryan Doerr also bettered his season numbers against KU. He punted twice for an average of 46.5 yards and pinned the Jayhawks inside their own 20-yard line once. That improved his 2010 average to 41.7 yards per punt.

K-State didn't take a step forward or backwards in the return game, however, as the Jayhawks only kicked off once. Redshirt-freshman receiver Tramaine Thompson broke several tackles on a 16-yard punt return, but that's really the only noise K-State's return unit was able to make in the contest.

Sophomore receiver Terrance

Williams has been Baylor's primary return man on both punt and kickoffs this season. He hasn't broken free for a touchdown yet this season, but his numbers — 22.3 yards per kick return and 11.2 yards per punt return — have been respectable.

Senior punter Derek Epperson has been outstanding this season, as he's punted 28 times for an average of 44.3 yards. He recorded a 60-yard punt earlier this season and has pinned opponents inside the 20-yard line nine times.

Freshman Aaron Jones hasn't been quite as consistent. He's connected on 14 of 17 attempts this season, but two of his three misses have come from inside 30 yards.

Things appear pretty even, but don't forget about K-State return man William Powell. The senior has come dangerously close to breaking free on several kick returns. If Powell remains explosive, give K-State the special teams edge.

PREDICTION

BAYLOR 31 K-STATE 24

The stakes in this one are a little bit higher than a normal game, because both teams are one win away from bowl eligibility. It's likely that both squads will enter the game with a similar strategy: get the ball to the playmaker as much as possible. For Baylor, it's Griffin. For K-State, it's Thomas. Whoever is able to stop the other team's go-to guy will likely walk away victorious.

Thomas looked more like himself last week than he had since K-State took on Missouri State in September. Baylor's run defense has been lacking this season, so expect him to continue building a head of steam and post more solid numbers. But, as will likely be the case in every remaining game, the magnitude of Thomas' success will be decided by his quarterback. If Coffman is

able to complete passes and open up the field, the Wildcats should keep things going offensively. If not, we could see a repeat of their showing against Nebraska.

Griffin has yet to truly be slowed by an opposing defense, and it's highly unlikely that K-State will break that trend. The Wildcats haven't had success against dual-threat quarterbacks this season, and Griffin is arguably better than any they've seen to this point. It will take a solid all-around effort by the defense in order to keep the Bears' offense in check. The Wildcats' secondary can't allow receivers to roam free, and it's imperative that the front seven keep Griffin in the backfield.

A win is definitely not out of the question for K-State, but the Wildcats' track record indicates Griffin will run wild and the Bears will pick up the win.

-Compiled by Justin Nutter

K-State will have hands full with Baylor's offense



Tyler Scott

lot of yards through the air. Nebraska's quarterback, Taylor Martinez, used mostly his legs rather than his arm to help the Huskers to a victory over K-State earlier this month.

The key for K-State to win will be the task of stopping Griffin and having a similar offensive performance against Kansas. Both K-State and Baylor surrender an average of 380 yards per game, so it will probably be a shootout if both teams are doing what they should.

Running back Daniel Thomas is in a drought right now, as he has not reached 100 rushing yards the last three games. The last time he reached the century mark was against Iowa State on Sept. 18. It could be four straight games because the Bears front four is dominant. Baylor's defensive end Tevin Elliott is one of the top sack leaders in the nation with five, so quarterback Carson Coffman will not only need to make accurate passes, but get rid of the ball quicker than usual.

The Wildcats are currently one win away from bowl eligibility. A win against Baylor would complete the assignment so K-State wouldn't have to fight for it against Oklahoma State or Texas.

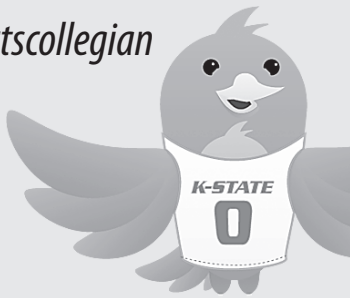
However, this week, I think the Wildcats will have to wait on a sixth win. Baylor's offense is more balanced and their defense is a bit inconsistent, but with Daniel Thomas being K-State's only true consistent player, the Bears should be able to hold the rest of the offense in check. The Wildcats being on the road also may hurt its chances of winning as Baylor is 3-0 at home this season.

I see Baylor pulling out a victory against the Wildcats.

Tyler Scott is a senior in journalism and mass communications. Please send comments to sports@spub.ksu.edu.

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COFFMAN | Fans, students praising QB's efforts

Continued from Page 1

work and know which ones are the best alternatives.

"I think the coaches expect me to do that because they've been teaching me all week, 'These are the looks we want to run into these plays,' so if I see something, I think they trust me to get into the right play," Coffman said.

But far be it from him to bask

in the success of one game. He went to the K-State-Nebraska volleyball game last weekend and received a small standing ovation, but it is not going to his head.

"I felt pretty embarrassed, so I just kind of put my head down and went to my seat," Coffman said.

One person attending the volleyball game told Coffman he voted for him for the Big 12

player of the week, but Coffman said he does not really pay attention to that kind of thing. He was, however, voted as the College Football Performance Awards National Performer of the Week. Head coach Bill Snyder said he thinks Coffman will continue to be diligent and improve.

"He has to understand how he got there, and he got there by diligent work and focus and

concentration and effort and a mindset that allowed him to make the right decisions," Snyder said. "And I think as long as he continues in that direction — and I think he's that type of young guy, I don't think he's going to 'drink the Kool-Aid,' as they say — I think he'll continue to focus on what's important and how he can improve himself from where he is."

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BU SCOUTING REPORT BU

The diagram illustrates the Baylor Bears' 2010 roster, organized by position and color-coded by their primary strength or weakness. A legend at the bottom indicates that white circles represent 'WEAKNESSES' and black circles represent 'STRENGTHS'.

Offense:

- Quarterback (QB):** Robert Griffin III (White circle - Weakness)
- Running Back (RB):** Kendall Wright #1 (Black circle - Strength), Robert Griffin III #10 (White circle - Weakness)
- Wide Receiver (WR):** Kendall Wright #1 (Black circle - Strength), Terrance Williams #2 (Black circle - Strength)
- Tight End (TE):** (Black circle - Strength)
- Offensive Line:** Center (C, White circle - Weakness), Guards (LG, LG, White circle - Weakness), Tackles (LT, LT, White circle - Weakness)

Defense:

- Defensive Line:** Defensive Ends (DE, DE, White circle - Weakness), Defensive Tackles (DT, DT, White circle - Weakness)
- Linebackers (LB):** (Three black circles - Strength)
- Secondary:** Strong Safety (SS, White circle - Weakness), Free Safety (FS, White circle - Weakness), Cornerbacks (CB, CB, White circle - Weakness)

Player Profiles:

- Kendall Wright #1 (WR):** Wright, a junior, enters this weekend's matchup as one of the most prolific receivers in Baylor history. He currently ranks fourth on the career charts with 156 receptions, sixth with 1,924 yards and eighth with 12 touchdowns. He needs 27 catches to become the Bears' all-time leading receiver.
- Robert Griffin III #10 (QB):** Griffin, a sophomore, has played a big role in turning the Bears into more than a bottom dweller in the Big 12 South. Since returning from an injury that ended his 2009 campaign, he's thrown for 1,969 yards and rushed for 376 while accounting for 12 total touchdowns.
- Terrance Williams #2 (WR):** Williams, a sophomore, has been one of the Bears' top all-around threats through seven games. He ranks fourth on the team with 22 catches for 265 yards, while he's tied for second with three receiving touchdowns. He has also racked up 491 yards as a kick and punt returner this season.

Baylor Bears (5-2 Overall, 2-1 Big 12 Conference)

STRENGTHS

Quarterback: When Robert Griffin III went down with a season-ending knee injury last season, the identity of Baylor's offense totally changed. With Griffin back under center in 2010, the Bears are off to a 5-2 start and have Big 12 fans across the nation wondering what last season could have been in Waco. Griffin, a sophomore and dual-threat option, has played significant roles in both the passing and running games this season. Through seven games, he's racked up 1,969 passing yards. His average of 281.29 passing yards per game ranks 14th nationally, while Baylor ranks 13th in passing offense.

Griffin is also the Bears' second-leading rusher. He's carried 70 times for 376 yards and a team-leading six touchdowns. K-State has had issues with dual-threat quarterbacks this season, and Griffin could

pose several more problems.

Wide receiver: A team's receiving targets should obviously be considered a strength when the quarterback has racked up nearly 2,000 yards halfway through the season. Six players have recorded at least 100 receiving yards this season, but the Baylor receiving corps has been led by junior Kendall Wright in 2010. Wright, one of the top receivers in school history, leads the squad with 40 catches for 535 yards, and he's tied for second on the team with three touchdowns. He is just 27 catches short of the school's career record.

The Wildcats will also have to look out for sophomores Josh Gordon, who leads the team with five touchdowns, and Terrance Williams, who had accounted for three touchdowns. Williams has also established himself as a special teams threat, as he owns 491

return yards through seven games. He currently leads the team in all purpose yardage with 759. This unit should provide a good challenge for K-State's pass defense, which enters the contest with a No. 12 national ranking.

Tight end: Starting tight end Brad Taylor, a senior, has only caught eight passes this season, but they have gone for 111 yards and a touchdown. Taylor has also played a factor as a blocker on a team that has only allowed six sacks through seven games. Don't expect Taylor to get a ton of looks in tomorrow's game, but the Wildcats will need to keep an eye on him since he has proved to be an ample set of hands.

Offensive line: As mentioned previously, the Bears' quarterbacks have only been sacked six times this season, thanks in large part to an experienced

starting front five. The unit is led by senior left tackle Danny Watkins. Watkins, a Canada native and All-America candidate, has started every game at that position since arriving at Baylor in 2009. Junior center Philip Blake also started all 12 games last season. K-State's run defense improved significantly last week against Kansas, but the Wildcats will need a big day from the entire front seven to make plays in the Bears' backfield.

Linebacker: While Baylor's defense hasn't performed particularly well in 2010, the linebacking corps has posted solid numbers. Each of the three starters ranks in the team's top-five in tackles, including senior Chris Francis, who ranks second on the squad with 47 stops. So far this season, the starters have combined for 126 total tackles, including five behind the line of scrimmage.

WEAKNESSES


Running back: As is usually the case with teams that include dual-threat quarterbacks, the Bears don't have a running back who has posted dominant numbers in 2010. Senior Jay Finley currently leads the team in rushing yards, but he's averaging just 63.9 per contest and has only crossed the goal line three times. Junior Terrance Ganaway has only netted 216 yards this season, but he's averaging 6.8 yards per carry. K-State will likely keep its main focus on Griffin, but Finley and Ganaway both have big play capabilities, so they can't be ignored when in the game.

Defensive line: The Bears have struggled against the run this season, as they rank 72nd nationally in rush defense. Freshman defensive end Tevin Elliott has posted eight tackles for loss and five sacks, but


that doesn't change the fact that Baylor is allowing 156.71 yards per game on the ground. That could mean a big day for K-State's Daniel Thomas, who got back on track with 91 yards and a score against KU.

Secondary: Baylor's back line of defense hasn't fared much better than the front, as the team ranks 79th in pass defense after seven games. Senior safety Byron Landor leads the team with 60 total tackles, but opponents have averages 225.86 yards through the air against the Bears' defensive backs. Don't expect a repeat of his performance against the Jayhawks, but Wildcat quarterback Carson Coffman will likely look to throw at the Baylor secondary at least enough to keep the Bears from stacking the box against Thomas and the run game.

-Compiled by Justin Nutter



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DUAL CONCERNS



Photo courtesy of Daniel Cernero | The Baylor Lariat
Baylor quarterback **Robert Griffin III** throws a pass against Texas Tech on Oct. 9. Through seven games this season, the sophomore has thrown for 1,969 yards, run for 376 yards and accounted for 20 total touchdowns. He poses a problem for K-State's defense, which has been burned by dual-threat quarterbacks twice already in 2010.

Baylor QB a proven threat in both running and passing attack

Justin Nutter
gameday editor

Folks around the Vanier Football Complex won't hesitate to tell you the first half of the 2010 season hasn't been nearly as consistent as they would have liked.

Sure, the Wildcats are 5-1, but several of those victories have been awfully close — sometimes too close for comfort. While K-State has dealt with some inconsistencies this season, one thing has remained constant from the get-go: the dual-threat quarterback hasn't exactly been the best friend of the Wildcats' defense.

It started with Central Florida quarterback Jeffrey Godfrey. In his first collegiate start, the redshirt-freshman had plenty of time in the Knights' backfield, and the results were costly. He ran for 99 yards and threw for 92 more, but The Wildcats did just enough to keep him off the scoreboard and won 17-13.

The next time out, it was Nebraska's Taylor Martinez. Like Godfrey, the Husker quarterback racked up chunks of yards at will. This time around, the results weren't just costly, they were catastrophic. Martinez racked up 241 yards on the ground and reached the end zone four times. The Wildcats had one of their worst-ever defensive

showings, and the Huskers left Snyder Family Stadium with a 45-13 blowout.

This weekend, K-State will face yet another run-and-gun style signal caller in Baylor's Robert Griffin III. Since returning from a season-ending knee surgery that he suffered in the Bears' third game last season, the sophomore has led his team to a 5-2 record and has it one win shy of its first bowl eligible season since 1994.

So, is Griffin more of a Godfrey-type or a Martinez-type? Should K-State be more worried about his throwing ability or running ability? Ask K-State coach head Bill Snyder, and he'll tell you it's not quite that simple.

"I think he has a combination of all that they have, and probably some more," Snyder said. "There isn't anything he can't do."

Griffin's return to the gridiron has transformed Baylor's offense into one of the nation's most productive units in 2010, as the Bears currently rank eighth in that department. They have scored at least 30

points in all but one game this season, and Griffin has played a major role — both through air and on the ground — in every contest.

Through the Bears' first seven games, he's thrown for 1,969 yards — the fourth-highest total in the country. He has also run for 376 yards and has accounted for 20 total touchdowns.

"I don't know if (he presents) one specific challenge. There are many challenges," Snyder said. "He can run, he can throw, he can lead, he can motivate. He's a complete player. He is fast, quick and he can change directions fluidly."

So far this season, only one defense has been able to limit Griffin on the stat sheet, and subsequently keep the Bears off the scoreboard. On Sept. 18, then-No. 4 TCU held the quarterback to 185 total yards. The Horned Frogs never allowed Griffin to get comfortable in the pocket, as they sacked him three times and came away with a 45-10 victory.

K-State's defense obviously

can't match the powerhouse caliber of TCU's unit, but that game showed that there may be hope for the Wildcats this weekend. The Horned Frogs were able to silence the Bears with a 4-2-5 defense — the same that K-State has fielded since Snyder returned last season. The formation is similar to a traditional 4-3 scheme, but one linebacker is replaced by a hybrid position often referred to as a "rover." The rover doubles as a linebacker and a safety and, according to Snyder, is used to increase the speed of the defense.

"How we line up is the same way we lined up a hundred years ago. It's just that you have different personnel in some of those positions," he said. "Probably what has caused that is the fact that the game has spread out a little bit and people are playing with four wide receivers more, so instead of having that additional run defender, you have an additional pass defender in his place."

Only time will tell whether or not K-State will be able to keep Griffin in check. But, with the chance to become bowl eligible for the first time since 2006 and a shot at the Big 12 North title still very much alive, the Wildcats have plenty of reasons to give Griffin and the rest of the Baylor offense their best shot tomorrow. Stay tuned.

GRIFFIN'S 2010 STATISTICS

Passing yards: 1,969

Passing touchdowns: 14

Rushing yards: 376

Rushing touchdowns: 6

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